

Trump-induced blue wave forming

What happens down ballot in Indiana if the president's reelection bid collapses?

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – We all knew this election was going to be about HIM. So what happens down ballot when President Trump's reelection bid collapses?

There is mounting evidence that a Democrat tsunami is forming. CNN/SSRS had Joe Biden with a 16-point lead nationally, 57-41%, on Monday, coming on the heels of NBC/Wall Street Journal Sunday that had Biden up 53-39%. The CNN poll revealed 69%

don't trust what the White House is telling the public about the president's health.

Biden leads by 9% in the Real Clear Polling composite, crossing the 50% milepost. In swing states, Biden has crossed the 50% mark in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, is at 49% in Michigan and Arizona, and is at 48% in



North Carolina and Florida. And almost all of these polls were conducted prior to Trump's hospitalization for COVID

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Pence/Harris debate

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Mike Pence/Kamala Harris veep debate showdown did not reshape the contours of the 2020 presidential election. The two nominees emphasized with a much greater degree of civility two core issues confronting American voters during this bizarre cycle, and offered a glimpse into 2024 when the two may be seeking the top job, as President Trump and Joe Biden are the two oldest nominees in history, with the former currently battling COVID 19.

But the most conspicuous element of this debate was ignored by both candidates when moderator Susan Page asked them whether they would accept the election results and participate in a peaceful transfer of power. Neither the



“I just plead with everyone to do your part. It doesn't matter what community you're in or how small or large an event. It could be a funeral, a wedding, a football game. We just see the odds of this virus spreading when you let your guard down.”

- Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday



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 HPI Weekly, \$350
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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



vice president or the senator directly answered. Pence said he expects President Trump to win.

Sen. Harris quickly confronted Vice President Pence on the pandemic, which she called the "the greatest failure of any presidential administration in the history of our country." Trump and Pence "still don't have a plan," she said.



Pence, who heads the White House Coronavirus Task Force, responded with a jab of his own. After saying the administration had "reinvented testing" and had begun "developing a vaccine," he added, "If you read the Biden plan, it reads like what we've done every step of the way. It looks a little bit like plagiarism, like Joe Biden would know." That was in reference to an earlier Biden presidential miscue dating back to his first run back in the 1980s.

Harris said, "Clearly it hasn't worked if you're looking at 210,000 dead bodies. The vice president is head of the task force."

Pence accused the Democratic ticket of "playing politics with people's lives" and added, "The president wanted people to remain calm." He added that the death toll could have been "2 million Americans" if President Trump hadn't shut down travel between the U.S. and China. "The reality is that we will have a vaccine, we believe, before the end of this year and it will have the capacity to save countless American lives."

Harris shot back, "How calm were you when you didn't know where you'd get the next roll of toilet paper" or whether "your kid was going to school."

Asked about the White House and Trump campaign holding "super spreader events," Pence insisted, "From the very first day, President Donald Trump has put the health of Americans first."

"The American people demonstrated, when given the facts, President Trump and I have great

confidence." As for the Rose Garden event announcing the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Amy Coney Barrett that may have resulted in dozens of COVID infections, Pence said, "My wife and I were there. It was an outdoor event, which all of our



scientists regularly and routinely advise. We are tested routinely. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris consistently talk about mandates. They talk about government control

and the Green New Deal. We're about freedom."

"The difference here is President Trump and I trust the American people to make choices in the best interest of their health," Pence said. Harris responded, "You respect the American people when you tell them the truth."

AP fact-checker: The event, introducing Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett, drew more than 150 people and flouted safety recommendations in multiple ways, such as a lack of social distancing and most attendees not wearing masks. And it was not all outside.

Another flashpoint occurred over the George Floyd murder by Minneapolis police, the ensuing Black Lives Matter movement and civil strife. "We are never going to condone violence but we must always fight for the values that we hold dear," Harris said. "I'm a former career prosecutor. I know what I'm talking about. Bad cops are bad for good cops."

Pence said his "heart breaks" for Breonna Taylor's family but added that he "trusts" the U.S. justice system. The vice president added that it is "remarkable" that Harris, as a former California attorney general and prosecutor, would question the grand jury's decision in the case not to charge an officer with killing her. He also struck the Trump campaign's law and order theme it tried to emphasize over the pandem-

ic. "I want everyone to know who puts on the uniform of law enforcement every day, President Trump and I stand with you," Pence said. "We don't have to choose between supporting law enforcement, proving public safety and supporting our African American neighbors."

Harris tried to make Trump's tax returns as an issue. "It'd be really good to know who the president owes money to," Harris said. "The one thing we know about Joe, he puts it all out there. He is honest, he is forthright. Donald Trump, on the other hand, has been about covering up everything."

Pence shifted on that issue, saying that while Trump has paid "his fair share" of taxes, he added, "On Day One, Joe Biden's going to raise your taxes."

On climate change, Sen. Harris observed, "We have seen a pattern with this administration, which is, they don't believe in science." Pence turned that issue into an economic one. "Sen. Harris was one of 10 senators to vote against the USMCA. You put your agenda ahead of the American people and American jobs." He added that China should be "blamed" for the pandemic. "They did not let U.S. personnel in until February."

Harris responded that President Trump removed U.S. epidemiologists who had been on the ground in China for the purpose of monitoring for this type of pandemic.

"Joe Biden wants to go back to the economic surrender to China, that when we took office, half of our international trade deficit was with China alone," Pence said. "And Joe Biden wants to repeal all of the tariffs that President Trump put into effect to fight for American jobs and American workers."

AP fact checker: For starters, tariffs are taxes that consumers and businesses pay through higher prices. So Pence is defending tax increases. The tariffs against China did cause the trade deficit in goods with China to fall

in 2019. But that's a pyrrhic victory at best as overall U.S. economic growth slowed from 3% to 2.2% because of the trade uncertainty.

On health care, Pence said, "President Trump and I have a plan to improve health care and to protect preexisting conditions for all Americans."

AP Fact Checker: No, there is no clear plan. People with preexisting conditions are already protected by the Obama-era Affordable Care Act, and if the Trump administration succeeds in persuading the Supreme Court to overturn it, those protections will be in jeopardy.

Republican pollster Frank Luntz, who watched the debate with a group of undecided voters, observed, "My undecided voters think Mike Pence is more professional, but that he looks tired. They think Kamala Harris is more passionate, but her reaction-faces are really bothering people."

Pence biographer, Tom LoBianco, added, "As in 2016 (when Pence took a question about Trump's insults and said Clinton and Kaine were the truly insulting pols) Pence is doing a great job at stagecraft and parrying, but whiffing on facts and answering the question."

Politico's Ryan Lizza: Let's say this at the outset: This was a boring, unfocused debate between two well-prepared and polished candidates who had little interest in answering the questions posed to them — and were under virtually no pressure from the moderator to do so. Harris and Pence are both younger, more well-spoken, and closer to the beating hearts of their respective parties. Considering the challenges anyone would have defending the Trump record on the pandemic, Pence's ability to leave the stage after 90 minutes without being gutted by Harris was a bar cleared. The fly that nested in Pence's hair for more than two minutes was more embarrassing to him — and memorable to viewers — than any of Harris's jabs. ❖

Horse Race, from page 1

and his chaotic return to the hotspot White House, where the virus has spread to 34 staffers.

Sunday's NBC/Wall Street Journal poll had Biden leading Trump by 27% among seniors (62% to 35%), and Monday's CNN/SSRS poll had Biden up 21% (60% to 39%). Trump carried senior citizens by 7% in 2016.

Why is Trump collapsing?

First, he bombed in his first debate with Biden last week. Then he tested positive for COVID, and landed at Walter Reed Medical Center Friday evening. The White House has obfuscated the timelines of when he last tested negative and first tested positive, with rampant specula-

RealClearPolitics Election 2020			
President	Senate		House
Election 2020	Biden	Trump	Spread
RCP National Average	51.2	42.2	Biden +9.0
Top Battlegrounds	49.2	44.8	Biden +4.4
Latest Betting Odds	63.7	35.4	
Electoral College	Biden	Trump	Toss Ups
RCP Electoral Map	226	125	187
No Toss Up States	374	164	
Battlegrounds ● ○	Biden	Trump	Spread
Florida	48.2	44.7	Biden +3.5
Pennsylvania	50.6	44.3	Biden +6.3
Michigan	49.0	42.8	Biden +6.2
Wisconsin	50.2	44.6	Biden +5.6
North Carolina	48.3	46.9	Biden +1.4
Arizona	49.0	45.6	Biden +3.4
2020 vs. 2016	2020	2016	Spread
Top Battlegrounds	D +4.4	D +4.8	Trump +0.4
RCP National Average	D +9.0	D +5.5	Biden +3.5
Favorability Ratings	D +16.5	D +12.5	Biden +4.0

tion that he knew he was infected and contagious at his debate with the 78-year-old Biden. Trump showed up late and ducked taking the required COVID test.

His doctors at Walter Reed — who are treating their commander-in-chief boss — have been less than candid, and have been contradicted by Trump and Chief of Staff Mark Meadows. There was Trump's Sunday "joyride" stunt with two Secret Service agents in full PPE driving with him in the hermitically sealed Chevy Suburban.

When he returned

to the White House on Monday, he made a Mussolini-style balcony appearance while gasping for breath after removing his face mask, then going into the building with staff.

All but one of the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff are quarantining. And the kicker: Trump abruptly pulled the plug on COVID relief talks on Capitol Hill via tweet, an hour before the Wall Street bell, causing the markets to convulse, only to make a half-hearted course correction via Twitter the next day.

Unlike other presidents who might have been in a position to receive some sympathy for suffering from the virus, voters are reacting to the cavalier attitudes Trump and the White House have exhibited for months, from the flouting of medically prescribed protocols (like wearing masks) to packing Rose Garden and MAGA rallies with supporters, with dozens contracting the disease.

Trump sucks the oxygen from all other races; he is exhausting even for his supporters.

Politico Nightly observed: "Here is what everyone in Washington is thinking but does not want to say out loud: President Donald Trump is going to lose this election in 28 days, probably by a large margin. A growing number of insiders, including many Republicans, are starting to venture privately that this outcome is likely to be clear on Election Night, not days or weeks later. And Trump's collapse is likely to take Republican control of the Senate with him."

The last CBS Battleground Tracking Poll had President Trump with a 10% lead in Indiana, 54-44% in late September. There is little evidence that Trump's handling of the pandemic and his coming down with COVID has altered his support across rural and small town Indiana, though Indi-



HOWEY
POLITICS INDIANA



President (U.S. & Indiana)



President Donald Trump (R), Joseph Biden (D), Jo Jorgensen (L)

HPI Horse Race:

National: Likely D; Last week: Leans D
Indiana: Likely R; Last week: Safe R

Indiana Governor



Gov. Eric Holcomb (R), Woody Myers (D), Donald Rainwater (L)

HPI Horse Race:

This week: Safe R
Last week: Safe R

Indiana Attorney General



Todd Rokita (R) Jonathan Weinzapfel (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Leans R
Last week: Leans R

Congressional 2nd



U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorki (R) Pat Hackett (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Congressional 5th



Victoria Spartz (R), Christina Hale (D), Kenneth Tucker (L)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Congressional 9th



U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R) Andy Ruff (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

ana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer declined to release polling information on the Trump/Biden race Wednesday after revealing gubernatorial numbers (See Page 10).

When early voting began Tuesday in the state, suburban and urban counties and towns from Porter, Hamilton and Bartholomew counties to downtown Indianapolis reported long lines. Around the Indy City-County Building, the line stretched three blocks. A similar scene took place in Noblesville.

There's a reason why House Speaker Todd Huston is running TV ads in his rematch against Democrat Aimee Rivera Cole. It's inoculation for what appears to be the building Blue Wave. Campaign sources tell HPI that Huston is not in trouble ... for now.

Predicting wave elections in the Donald Trump era has been dicey. We thought we saw a blue tsunami in the early summer of 2016, and again on the eve of the first Trump/Clinton debate in last October's "Access Hollywood" weekend, but this is different. Trump is facing Joe Biden and not the much hated Hillary Clinton.

In the NBC/WSJ Poll, Trump was trailing Biden by a stunning 62-35% among senior citizens (which Trump carried four years ago) as well as suburban women, 58 to 33%. That's why you're seeing 5th CD GOP nominee Victoria Spartz's campaign running negative ads against Democrat Christina Hale, in addition to attack ads from the RNCC and Club For Growth.

It took the Democratic Watergate wave election of 1974 for the party to stake a majority in the Indiana Senate for a mere two years. Wave years have impacted the Indiana General Assembly before. The 1964 LBJ landslide took a House majority away from the GOP, giving Democrats a 40-plus seat majority.

But HPI believes it would take a 1964 or 1974 tsunami to dislodge those seats from the GOP majorities. Indiana Republicans are cognizant of the trends and will commit all resources to hold those seats.

The miniscule Senate Democratic caucus has just 10 members, so even if the most vicious Democratic wave were to take shape, there is virtually no chance for the party to take a majority.

As with the House, if President Trump craters at the top of the ticket, the problem for Democrats is that gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers has been an anemic fundraiser, giving Gov. Eric Holcomb's reelection chances an enhanced status and raising a potential bulwark against down-ballot carnage.

While Myers reported his first large donation on Oct. 1 (three totaling \$12,000) since mid-July, he has actually been out-raised on that front by Libertarian nominee Donald Rainwater, who reported receiving another \$15,000 from a California man on Oct. 1.

Republican sources tell HPI that while Trump won't carry Indiana by the 19% he did in 2016, he'll likely come in with a 6% to 8% plurality. Gov. Holcomb is running very strongly in some of the Indianapolis suburban districts where Trump is poised to be a liability. While he has taken some incoming flak from social conservatives, internal



Indiana General Assembly SD8



Sen. Mike Bohacek (R)
Gary Davis (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly SD30



Sen. John Ruckelshaus (R)
Fady Qaddoura (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD5



Rep. Dale Devon (D)
John Westerhausen (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

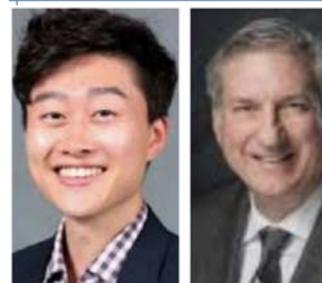
Indiana General Assembly HD7



Rep. Ross Deal (D)
Jake Teshka (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD15



Rep. Chris Chyung (D)
Hal Slager (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

polling from one of the most Republican congressional districts had Holcomb polling north of 70%, according to an informed and reliable source.

Here is HPI's rundown of potentially competitive districts. All other districts are considered safe for their current parties.

Indiana Senate

SD8: Sen. Mike Bohacek (R) v. Gary Davis (D). 2016 Results: Bohacek (R) 31,232, Maxine Spencer (D) 22,369. **2020 Analysis:** Bohacek created some headlines last month saying he would author a bill that would prevent local governments from "defunding the police." Bohacek won SD8 in 2016 following the retirement of Democratic State Sen. Jim Arnold, who along with State Sen. Anita Bowser kept this seat in the Democratic column for decades. Bohacek, a former Democrat, was aided by the Donald Trump/Mike Pence wave election, with 38.2% in his district backing Hillary Clinton. Democrat gubernatorial nominee John Gregg won the district with 49.3% that same year, while Sen. Joe Donnelly carried it with 49.8% in 2018. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

SD30: Sen. John Ruckelshaus (R) v. Fady Qaddoura (D). 2016 Results: Ruckelshaus (R) 36,833, Pamela Hickman (D) 33,188, Zachary Roberts (L) 2,564. **2020 Analysis:** This seat remains the Democrats' best hope for pickup. Both Qaddoura and Ruckelshaus have been running TV ads for more than a month. Ruckelshaus appears to have shelved an attack ad and is opting for an ad stressing "courtesy and respect" as well as a "trusted voice of reason." Qaddoura had a \$126,931 to \$95,873 cash on hand lead on mid-May pre-primary finance reports filed with the Indiana secretary of state. As of Tuesday, neither candidate has received any large donations. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

SD32: Sen. Aaron Freeman (R) v. Belinda Drake (D). 2016 Results: Freeman (R) 31,173, Sara Wiley (D) 20,184, Shane Zoellner (L) 2,170. **2020 Analysis:** Senate Democrats believe this district is trending Democrat, though Hillary Clinton polled 36.5% and John Gregg 43.7% in 2016 and Sen. Joe Donnelly had 44.4% in 2018, making it one of the more conservative districts in Marion County. This district fits the description of one that could come into play if a big Democratic national wave develops and swamps down ballot Republicans. Freeman had a \$160,000 to \$13,000 money lead in pre-primary reports. There has been no big donation activity. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Freeman.

SD35: Sen. Mike Young (R) v. Pete Cowden (D). 2016 Results: Young (R) 26,617, Phil Webster (D) 18,641. **2020 Analysis:** An internal Democrat poll had Young leading by 6%, just outside the survey's 3.5% MOE. This district is still a reliably GOP district. Hillary Clinton got only 36.2% against Donald Trump in 2016, John Gregg had just 44.9% and Sen. Donnelly had just 44% in 2018. Cowden is an Army Ranger veteran who served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. **Horse Race Status:** LEANS Young.



Indiana General Assembly HD19



Rep. Lisa Beck (D)
Julie Olthoff (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: **Leans Beck**
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD35



Rep. Melanie Wright (D)
Elizabeth Rowray (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD37



Rep. Todd Huston (R)
Aimee Cole Rivera (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Indiana General Assembly HD88



Chris Jeter (R)
Pam Dechert (D)
Open: Brian Bosma

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Indiana General Assembly HD89



Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer (R)
Mitch Gore (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

SD36: Sen. Jack Sandlin (R) v. Ashley Eason (D). 2016 Results: Sandlin (R) 26,696, Sean Gorman (D) 18,375. **2020 Analysis:** This is another seat that could potentially be in play should a national Democratic wave impact down-ballot races. Reliable sources tell HPI this race has tightened. While Hillary Clinton carried just 39.9% of the vote in 2016, John Gregg carried 46.8% that same year, and Sen. Donnelly won the district with 48.8% in 2018. Eason easily won the Democratic primary in June. The Indy Chamber endorsed Eason, saying, "Ashley Eason is a compelling choice, running a challenger campaign that demands attention and earned the BAC endorsement for Indiana Senate District 36 (the near south side of Indianapolis through much of Perry Township and into Johnson County). She will bring an energetic new voice to the State Senate, and a welcome perspective on the issues that count." **Horse Race Status:** LEANS Sandlin.

Indiana House

Our list of 16 House races includes the open seats of Republican Reps. Brian Bosma, David Wolkins, Woody Burton and Ron Bacon, and Democrat Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon. All are expected to remain with their current party.

The six tossup races include three rematches: Rep. Dale Devon against Democrat Dr. Donald Westerhausen, Rep. Chris Chyung against former Republican Rep. Hal Slager, and Rep. Lisa Beck v. former Republican Rep. Julie Olthoff. HPI moved the Beck/Olthoff race into a "Leans" Democrat this week.

All of these tossup races come in suburban districts, which could be impacted if Biden does defeat President Trump in a landslide. All other seats not listed here are considered safe for their current parties:

HD4: Rep. Ed Soliday (R) v. Valparaiso Councilwoman Deb Porter. 2018 Results: Rep. Soliday (R) 14,791 (53.5%), Frank Szczepanski (D) 12,862 (46.4%). 2016 Results: Soliday (R) 17,198, Pamela Fish (D) 14,247. **2020 Analysis:** Rep. Soliday is a frequent presence on our autumnal Horse Race list and he always seems to coast home. He makes this list because he comes in close to our 2,500-vote plurality in his last race. But we see him in danger only if a national Democratic wave develops that impacts down-ballot races. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Soliday.

HD5: Rep. Dale Devon (R) v. Dr. Donald Westerhausen (D). 2018 Results: Rep. Devon (R) 11,713 (51%), Westerhausen (D) 11,240 (49%). 2016 Results: Devon (unopposed). **2020 Analysis:** This is a rematch from 2018 and is worth keeping a close eye on because HD5 is a classic "suburban" district wedged between South Bend and Elkhart. If the 2nd CD race between U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski and Democrat Pat Hackett comes into play, HD5 could be impacted by a national wave. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD7: Rep. Ross Deal (D) v. South Bend Council-

man Jake Teshka (R). 2018 Results: Rep. Joe Taylor (D) 11,267 (51.7%), Troy Dillon (R) 10,540 (48.3%). 2016 Results: Rep. Joe Taylor (D) 12,164, Justin Chupp (R) 11,633, James Gillen (L) 1,471. **2020 Analysis:** This will be the first general election for Rep. Ross Deal, who was chosen by caucus to replace Rep. Taylor right after the 2018 election. He faces Republican Councilman Teshka, who is a former St. Joseph County Republican executive director who was appointed by caucus to fill the council seat vacated by Dave Varner. HD7 has been extremely competitive over the past two cycles. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD12: Open seat. Mike Andrade (D) v. Tom Wichlinski (R) 2018 Results: Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon (D) unopposed. 2016 Results: Reardon (D) 15,969, William Fine (R) 13,236. **2020 Analysis:** With Rep. Reardon opting for an unsuccessful 1st CD race, Democrat Mike Andrade will face Republican Tom Wichlinski. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Andrade.

HD15: Rep. Chris Chyung (D) v. Hal Slager (R). 2018 Results: Chyung (D) 12,468 (50.2%), Slager (R) 12,386 (49.8%). 2016 Results: Slager (R) 16,150, Tom O'Donnell (D) 13,580. **2020 Analysis:** Republican Hal Slager is back for a rematch with Rep. Chyung and this race is expected to be another nailbiter. Expect the federal and state pandemic response to be an issue in this campaign. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD18: Open seat. Winona Lake Councilman Craig Snow v. Chad Harris (D). Retiring State Rep. David Wolkins, who won the seat with 76% in 2018. **2020 Analysis:** Republican Craig Snow will face Democrat Chad Harris, chairman of the Wabash County Democratic Party. Snow won the nomination with the endorsements of Warsaw Mayor Joe Thallemer and Wabash Mayor Scott Long. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Snow.

HD19: Rep. Lisa Beck (D) v. Julie Olthoff (R). 2018 Results: Beck (D) 12,249 (50.5%), Rep. Olthoff (R) 12,998 (49.5%). 2016 Results: Olthoff (R) 15,218, Rep. Shelli Vandenburg (D) 14,885, Evan Demaree (L) 1,288. **2020 Analysis:** This will be a rematch in a truly competitive district that has changed parties over the last two cycles. Should a Democratic wave emerge, Beck, pictured, will likely prevail. Stay tuned. **Horse Race Status:** LEANS Beck.



HD35: Rep. Melanie Wright (D) v. Yorktown

School Trustee Elizabeth Rowray (R). 2018 Results: Rep. Wright (D) 12,799, Ben Fisher (R) 12,465 (49.3%). 2016 Results: Rep. Wright (D) 15,630, Bill Walters (R) 14,119. **2020 Analysis:** This will be a battle between educators in what has been a tossup district. Wright began a TV ad campaign a couple of weeks ago, stressing her work on rural issues. A Democratic wave could save Wright this cycle. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD37: Speaker Todd Huston (R) v. Aimee Rivera Cole (D). 2018 Results: Rep. Huston (R) 16,913 (54.3%); Cole (D) 14,141 (45.5%). 2016 Results: Rep. Huston (R) 22,362, Mike Boland (R) 12,581. **2020 Analysis:** This is a rematch in a district that is trending Democratic and falls within the footprint of the competitive 5th CD between Democrat Christina Hale and Republican State Sen. Victoria Spartz. Huston became speaker of the House after being unanimously chosen by the House Republican caucus to succeed Speaker Brian Bosma this past session. Huston has begun TV ads, stressing his role in crafting balanced budgets and record education spending. We see Huston's early advertising as more of an inoculation at this point, but if a big enough Democratic wave develops, this race could come into play. In a historical footnote, Speaker J. Roberts Dailey lost HD37 in 1986. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Huston.



HD39: Rep. Jerry Torr (R) v. Ashley Klein (D). 2018 Results: Rep. Torr (R) 18,861 (57%), Mark Hinton (D) 14,207 (43%). 2016 Results: Rep. Torr (R) 22,362, David Russ (D) 12,638. **2020 Analysis:** Klein joined neighboring Democrat Aimee Rivera Cole in the "Hamilton County 1956" TV ad. GOP sources say defending Torr has become a priority. In past cycles, Torr wasn't vulnerable because the district was so Republican. He accepted authorship of a number of controversial bills, but with HD39 diversifying, such legislation has become a lightning rod. Torr has held the seat since 1996. During the 2005 legislative session, Rep. Torr authored the Daylight Savings Time (DST) bill that called for Indiana to finally observe DST. **Horse Race Status:** LEANS Torr.

HD58: Open seat. Michelle Davis (R) v. Cindy Reinert (D). **2020 Analysis:** In an open seat being vacated by retiring State Rep. Woody Burton, Republican Michelle Davis will take on Democrat Cindy Reinert. Burton defeated Reinert 63-36% in 2018. Davis is the dean of high school students at Central Nine Career Center, before becoming the director of the adult education program, overseeing a 67% funding increase. She won the primary with the endorsement of Rep. Burton. If the GOP loses this district, it means a nightmare scenario has emerged. **Horse Race Status:** LIKELY Davis.

HD70: Rep. Karen Engleman (R) v. Kent Yeager (D). 2018 Results: Rep. Engleman was unopposed. **2020 Analysis:** Yeager, a former agriculture liaison to U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, is a former public policy advisor to the Indiana Farm Bureau. Engleman is assistant majority caucus chair. This has been a reliable Republican district, but Yeager is a high-profile challenger and this race could be an outlier if a massive Democratic national wave develops. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Engleman.

HD75: Open seat. Warrick County Councilwoman Cindy Ledbetter (R) v. John Hurley (D). **2020 Analysis:** In an open seat being vacated by State Rep. Ron Bacon, who defeated Hurley 61% to 38% in 2018, Councilwoman Ledbetter defeated Warrick County Republican chairman Michael Griffin in the GOP primary. This is another outlier seat we'll keep an eye on. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Ledbetter.

HD81: Rep. Martin Carbaugh (R) v. Kyle Miller (D). 2018 Results: Carbaugh (R) 10,504 (53.7%), Kyle Miller (D) 9,069 (46.3%). 2016 Results: Rep. Carbaugh (R) 13,918, Bob Haddad (D) 8,919. **2020 Analysis:** Miller will have a rematch against Rep. Carbaugh. Again, we're keeping an eye on this race as an outlier indicator. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Carbaugh.

HD88: Open seat. State Rep. Chris Jeter (R) v. Pam Dechert (D). 2018 Results: Rep. Brian Bosma (R) 18,825 (55.5%), Poonam Gill (D) 15,099 (44.5%). 2016 Results: Rep. Bosma (R) 24,463, Dana Black (D) 13,039. **2020 Analysis:** Former House Speaker Brian Bosma resigned, and Jeter was chosen by caucus to replace him last summer. Jeter won the Republican primary over Deputy Fishers Mayor Leah McGrath, who had been endorsed by Gov. Eric Holcomb. This district falls within the 5th CD, and could come into play in a blue tidal wave. Because Jeter is new and largely unknown to many Democrat and independent voters, this seat could come into play late. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Jeter.

HD89: Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer (R) v. Mitch Gore (D). 2018 Results: Rep. Kirchhofer (R) 10,455 (50.5%), John Barnes (D) 10,237 (49.5%). 2016 Results: Rep. Kirchhofer (R) 13,678, Rachel Burke (D) 11,356. **2020 Analysis:** Kirchhofer is Marion County Republican chair running in a district that is trending Democrat. Gore is a captain with the Marion County sheriff. This seat could flip, even without a wave scenario. It's too early for a rating change, but **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Congress

5th CD:

The 5th CD fits the emerging profile of a competitive suburban district and is expected to be the only Indiana congressional race to have both parties actively involved. If Hale wins in November, it would be the only contested CD to change parties under the current maps from the 2011 reapportionment (Jackie Walorski won the open 2nd CD seat vacated by Joe Donnelly who ran for the Senate in 2012). The Cook Partisan Index rates the 5th CD +9 Republican, with Trump carrying it 52.6% to 40.9% in 2016, and Romney carrying it 57.5% to 40.7% in 2012.

Hale announced the best fundraising quarter of her campaign, raising more than \$1.7 million in the third quarter of 2020. Over the course of the cycle, Hale's campaign has received contributions from more than 14,000 unique donors, 89% of which were \$100 or less.

"I'm proud to be running a campaign that's powered by such incredible grassroots support," said Hale. "It's clear that Hoosiers in the 5th District are ready for a change; they want a representative who will go to Washington, put partisanship aside, and get things done. And that's exactly what I'll do."

Her third quarter total came as Club For Growth PAC began airing a new attack ad against Hale over the riots last May in Indianapolis. In an ad titled "Wrong Side," the voice over says, "Indianapolis' war memorials were trashed. Stores have been looted and arson committed in the streets of Indianapolis. Christina Hale joined a Black Lives Matter protest against our police. Christina Hale is endorsed by politicians who have defended the criminals who have vandalized public property, looted stores, and burned cities across the country." The IndyStar reported that according to The Center for Responsive Politics, outside groups have spent \$1.59 million on attack ads against Hale and \$1.25 million on attack ads against Spartz.

Horse Race Status: Tossup.

HPI is keeping an eye on the 2nd and 9th CD as potential outliers if a Democratic wave develops. Both are listed as "Likely Republican."

In the 2nd CD, Republican U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski sits on a \$1,109,878 war chest after posting \$1,725,188 for the cycle. Democratic nominee Pat Hackett has posted \$487,260 for the cycle, \$319,235 spent and with \$169,223 cash on hand after winning a contested primary. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 2nd CD as +13 Republican. Donald Trump carried the district over Hillary Clinton 58.9% to 35.9% in 2016; Mitt Romney carried it over President Obama 56.1% to 42.1% in 2012. The 2nd had a competitive history prior to the 2011 maps. After Democrat Tim Roemer upset U.S. Rep. John Hiler in 1990, it stayed in Democratic hands until he retired and Republican Chris Chocola defeated former congresswoman Jill Long Thompson in 2002 and Joe Donnelly in 2004, before Donnelly won the rematch during the 2006 Democratic wave year. In the face of redistricting in 2011, Donnelly opted for the U.S. Senate race, and Rep. Walorski won the seat on her second try after losing to Donnelly in 2010.

HPI Horse Race Status: Likely Walorski.

In the 9th CD, Democrat Andy Ruff has raised a paltry amount of money and has resorted to playing community concerts in local parks. If this race comes into play, the GOP nightmare has arrived. Republican U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth has posted \$876,439 for the cycle, spent \$297,669 and had \$586,096 cash on hand. Democrat Andy Ruff has posted \$48,822 for the cycle, spent \$24,412 and had \$24,410 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 9th +13 Republican. Trump won it 60.8% to 34% for Clinton in 2016; Romney carried it 57.1% to 40.7% in 2012. Like the 2nd CD, the 9th changed parties frequently prior to the 2011 maps, with Republican Mike Sodrell holding it for a term before Democrat Baron Hill reclaimed it during the 2006 wave election. In 2010, Republican Todd Young reclaimed it for the GOP in the Tea Party wave elec-

tion. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Hollingsworth.

Here is how the other six Indiana CDs shape up:

1st CD: Democrat nominee Frank J. Mrvan has raised \$300,306, spent \$271,612 in his primary defeat over Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and several other candidates, and had \$28,694 cash on hand. His Republican rival, perennial candidate Mark Leyva, has not filed a FEC report. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 1st +8 Democrat, with Clinton carrying it 53.8% to 41.3% in 2016; while Obama won it 61.2% to 37.4% over Romney in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Mrvan.

3rd CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Jim Banks has raised \$777,556 for the cycle, spent \$525,350 and had \$263,715 cash on hand. Democratic nominee Chip Coldiron has raised \$9,580, spent \$5,270 and had \$4,393 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates it +18 Republican. Trump carried it over Clinton 64.7% to 29.9% in 2016; Romney had 62.5% to 35.7% for Obama in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Banks.

4th CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Jim Baird has raised \$244,672 for the cycle, spent \$142,310 with \$212,163 cash on hand. Democrat Joe Mackey has raised \$18,672, spent \$18,450 and had \$439 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates the 4th CD +17 Republican. Trump carried it over Clinton 63.9% to 30% in 2016 while Romney carried it over Obama 60.8% to 36.8% in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Baird.

6th CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Greg Pence has raised \$1,972,892 for the cycle, spent \$1,838,148 and had \$335,269. Democratic nominee Jeannine Lee Lake has finally made an FEC filing, but revealed a mere \$9,709 cash on hand. Rep. Pence ducked a joint appearance with Lake this past week. The Cook Partisan Index rates it +18 Republican. Trump carried it 67.5% to 27.3% for Clinton in 2016; Romney carried it 60.4% to 37.3% over Obama in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Pence.

7th CD: Democratic U.S. Rep. Andre Carson has raised \$713,918 for the cycle, spent \$622,241 and had \$942,174 cash on hand. Republican Susan Marie Smith posted \$32,367 for the cycle, spent \$15,570 with \$16,796 cash on hand. This is the only other Democratic district in Indiana, with the Cook Partisan Index rating it +11 Democrat. Clinton carried it 58.2% to 35.7% for Trump in 2016; Obama carried it 62.9% to 35.4% for Romney in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Carson.

8th CD: Republican U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon reported \$709,310 raised for the cycle, \$683,660 spent and had \$259,881 cash on hand. Democratic nominee Thomasina Marsili has posted \$35,765 for the cycle, spent \$25,426 and had \$10,339 cash on hand. The Cook Partisan Index rates the not-so-bloody 8th CD +15 Republican. Trump carried it 64.4% to 30% for Clinton four years ago; Romney carried it 58.4% to 39.6% for Obama in 2012. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Safe Bucshon. ❖

Holcomb maintains 40% lead over Myers; Rainwater at 6%

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Republicans released an internal poll on Wednesday showing Gov. Eric Holcomb with a 40-point lead.

The BK Strategies Poll (600 likely voters, Oct. 4-5, MOE +/-4.0) had Holcomb leading the ballot test 60%, with beleaguered Democrat nominee Woody Myers at 21% and Libertarian Donald Rainwater at 6%.

Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer decided to release the internal polling after an Indy Politics survey in September had Holcomb with just a 6% lead over Myers, while Rainwater was at 24%. "I think it is important to have accurate numbers in the arena," he said.

"There may be some movement, but there is not a lot of volatility in this race," said Hupfer, who doubles as Holcomb's campaign manager.

Hupfer declined to release numbers on the presidential race. Asked if Holcomb would run ahead of President Trump and Vice President Pence, Hupfer said, "It's too early to tell. It's certainly a possibility.

"My spin is what the governor has done over these past four years makes it hard for a candidate to get traction," he said of Myers and Rainwater.



Gov. Holcomb presents the 2020 SACHEM award to Hoosier businessman Reginald O. Jones, Sr. He has given back to the community, encouraged students to strive for excellence & helped the homeless in Indianapolis.



The survey included 44% Republican, 33% Democrat and 19% independent.

It had the Indiana right/wrong track numbers at 60/31%. Among conservatives, it was 74/18% and among independents, it was 60/24%.

Holcomb's approve/disapprove stood at 63/18%, Myers was at 18/7% and Rainwater at 10/5%. Holcomb's job approval stood at 71/21%.

Myers received his first large contributions on Oct. 1 since July. He received \$10,000 from the American Federation of Teachers COPE PAC, \$1,000 from Cheryl Sullivan of Indianapolis and Nicholas Stein of New Albany. Libertarian nominee Donald Rainwater received another \$15,000 from Chris Rufer of Woodland, CA., on Oct. 1.

On Wednesday, Myers said Holcomb reopened the state too early. "Sadly, because of the decisions of our state leaders, more Hoosiers will likely die," Myers said. "All the scientific facts mean that we're going to have a great deal more of this virus in our state to deal with in the coming weeks and months in addition to seasonal influenza." ❖

Despite Trump, INGOP could have good year

By **MARK SOUDER**

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — Over the years, alliances and issues change, but Indiana Republicans like to battle over differences. The fact is, so do Indiana Democrats. Every state does this. We just do it better. Contentious times on issues lead to divisions within and among parties. So do controversial individuals and internal power struggles. In 2020, we have all those things.

Gov. Eric Holcomb has a few huge advantages in his reelection campaign. The biggest



is our state's modern history of stability through all chaos. The Indiana gubernatorial two-party victory margins were: 1984 (5%), 1988 (6%), 1992 (25%), 1996 (5%), 2000 (15%), 2004 (7%), 2008 (17%), 2012 (3%), and 2016 (6%). Two facts jump out: **1.)** the three wide margins (1992, 2000, and 2008) were reelection campaigns of Governors Bayh, O'Bannon and Daniels and **2.)** otherwise, for nearly four decades, the two political tribes in Indiana have been fairly evenly matched. The Republicans have won only one race with a margin of more than 7% since the Ronald Reagan sweep year of 1980.

However, it takes a ground shift for an Indiana governor to lose a reelection campaign. In fact, no elected governor (Joe Kernan had been elected as lieutenant governor) has EVER been defeated for reelection.

Then there is the matter of money. The Republican Holcomb-Crouch ticket is the equivalent of commercial bank and the Democrat Party ticket of Myers-Lawson is a piggy bank.

The under-ticket of state legislators is dominantly Republican. So are most county officeholders. President

Donald Trump and Hoosier Vice President Mike Pence are likely to carry Indiana, even if Trump carries only five states. This not only provides pull, but helps straight-ticket voting.

In other words, cracks or not, Gov. Holcomb and Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch are likely to prevail by a respectable margin. But that does not mean that issues and the expanding absurdities of President Trump's personal behavior could not present some moments of angst if Trump continues to implode (the past two weeks have been a disaster).

Three Indiana divisions add to the general Trump-caused chaos. 1.) The gas tax increase to pay for roads 2.) COVID fights and 3.) the bitter attorney general contest.

The gas tax issue tends to split conservatives between more traditional conservatives and more libertarian ones. Traditional conservatives, while skeptical of all government, generally oppose expansion of federal power but are not necessarily opposed to state and local government initiatives. Libertarians are more skeptical of all government.

Libertarians, in general, don't like any tax. Traditional conservatives oppose federal tax hikes, but they tend to pick and choose more at the state and local level. For example, if you want roads without potholes or roads that connect new growth to existing roads, it has to be paid for. One standard Republican tax is a user tax.

The more libertarian, anti-government activists blame Holcomb for the increase in the gas tax. While they haven't been very forgiving about it, his COVID policies mostly replaced and expanded the anger among that faction.

It is hard to sort out specific policies that angered his Republican critics, though masks are clearly the symbol. In general, it is anger at COVID and the exaggerations pushed by the media.

It is the classic case of believing something is exaggerated until one sees it personally; kind of a doubting Thomas sort of thing. But the wrinkle is this: Skepticism has been carried to the next level with an assumption by the critics, that when someone you know got sick or died, that the reason (COVID) may not be the real reason, that the Chinese did this to you on purpose, that Trump is the only person who tried to protect you ... in other words, there is some sort of giant conspiracy. Therefore masks, social distancing, banning assembly, etc are all part of this plot to make us serfs.

The fact that the president himself was seriously ill and now many of the top officials in our government have tested positive seems to have hardened the position of the diehards, though it has rattled pretty much every other American.



In fact, if one reacts defiantly to an infected federal government, you are a Trump diehard. It has nothing to do with Supreme Court nominations or even defunding the police: You have become a Trump diehard.

However, the question is not the diehards; it is about past Trump voters who find the Democrats increasingly leftist policies reprehensible but Trump also increasingly reprehensible. Will they stick with the Republican Party?

Holcomb, as a governor, couldn't just tweet COVID away. He had to make decisions. Every decision was going to tick off, well, about half the people or more. It has been a tricky path.

One poll suggested that the Libertarian candidate was viable. That would require another column, but I think the combination of polling accuracy problems, lack of understanding of straight ticket voting, and other distortions suggest that spoiler Libertarian vote may increase slightly but not cause Holcomb to lose.

The removal of Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill, the best pro-life public advocate to have ever held that position and an across the board defender of conservative principles, further upset those already upset plus additional social conservatives.

There are several reasons that I believe Todd Rokita will not only win the attorney general contest, but win comfortably even though his opponent is a very viable candidate. One Rokita strength is that he is a committed advocate of pro-life principles. No committed pro-lifer could justify a "no" vote. It would be putting personal frustration over saving babies.

Secondly, law and order, specifically supporting the police and the courts, may be the most critical Republican concern right now. The attorney general is the most important post related to that issue, though the governor and every state legislator is also important. Every conservative understands its importance.

Cracks or not, there is likely to be some Republican slippage. Some of that damage is a long-term problem in Indiana as well as for Republicans nationally, such as suburban slippage (like in Hamilton County), female alienation by Trump, and increasing alienation of minority voters in all sub-groups including those once Republican (e.g. Asian-Americans). A white male party is not viable. However, unless Trump continues to free fall, Republicans are likely to have a good year, if not a great one, in Indiana.

But, as every Republican knows, waking up in the morning and checking the news is a bit of adventure these days. ❖

Souder is a former Indiana Republican congressman.

Trump's relief reversal gives Young whiplash

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump's reversal on coronavirus relief legislation might be giving Sen. Todd Young policy whiplash.

Just days after exhorting his administration and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to reach an agreement on a package to boost an economy ravaged by COVID-19, Trump abruptly switched gears on Tuesday and called off negotiations.



That change of heart forced Young to modify his own position on getting a recovery package through Congress before the election. He was looking forward to that outcome a few days ago and completely abandoned hope as of yesterday morning. Young's gyrations were evident in two meetings with reporters – one

on Zoom on Friday, Oct. 2, and one on a conference call on Wednesday morning.

"I think we're getting closer to an agreement between [Treasury Secretary] Steven Mnuchin on one hand, who's representing the administration in these negotiations, and Nancy Pelosi on the other to try and reach a reasonable agreement to provide relief for our small businesses, our health care providers, our school corporations, our childcare centers – all the other entities and individuals within this ecosystem that makes our society operate," Young told reporters on Oct. 2.

The Johnson County Republican had a sense of urgency about hammering out an agreement.

"This is an emergency. It is important for Congress to be able to act," Young said. "It's unfortunate that the bill we passed out of the Senate was not something that received much attention over in the House of Representatives because there's significant overlap between that legislation and the [House bill]. But I'm always open to principled compromise and I really hope we can pass a bill now rather than waiting until after the election."

Young has his own policy stake in the debate over virus relief. He is co-author of the RESTART Act along with Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo. The legislation would provide loans to cover six months of payroll, benefits and fixed operating expenses for small and medium-size businesses that have lost substantial revenue due to the pandemic, according to a fact sheet. The measure has about 58 bipartisan co-sponsors.

"I played a significant role in this overall effort to provide a fulsome and responsible legislative package in this phase four [pandemic recovery] initiative," Young said

on Oct. 2. "I'm hopeful something gets done and count me in as someone who has given fair consideration to whatever might be agreed upon by the administration and Speaker Pelosi."

That sounds like the Young Hoosiers have gotten to know over his tenure in the House and Senate. He's an earnest legislator who once called himself a "policy entrepreneur."

But that wasn't the Young who spoke to reporters on Wednesday following Trump's pulling the plug on pandemic legislation negotiations. In order to stay in line with his party's leader, Young suddenly began sounding like a partisan hack.

"Democrats have been unwilling to reach a deal for the good of the American people," Young said in the conference call with reporters on Wednesday.

Brian Francisco of the Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette pressed Young on why Senate Republicans were prioritizing before the election the confirmation of Judge Amy Coney Barrett, who serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit and lives in South Bend, over the passage of coronavirus relief.

Young laid the blame at the feet of Pelosi, the same person he characterized as being on the verge of an agreement with the administration just a few days ago. Now she is the political villain pushing bailouts for state and local governments that Republicans think don't deserve them.

"The reason for that is Nancy Pelosi and her continued reluctance to be a good-faith negotiator when it comes to delivering a phase four economic relief package," Young said. "That is the reason the president decided to end these sham negotiations where Speaker Pelosi has really not made serious efforts to find common ground with us as it relates to coronavirus negotiations."

Young added: "On multiple occasions, national Democrats have blocked targeted relief efforts, and the left-wing radicals, who are really driving the agenda, especially I the House of Representatives, are winning out."

Young portrayed the Senate as doing the people's work.

"I am unapologetic in saying that the Republican-controlled Senate is actually trying to be responsive to the needs of their constituents, and will continue to work towards that end before the election through the nomination process and hopefully confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett and after the election, when I hope a phase four package can come together," he said.

Just hours after ending negotiations on Tuesday, Trump made another reversal and called for relief for individual Americans and for the airline industry. Perhaps Young will have to adjust his stance on negotiations again.

❖

Schoeff is Washington correspondent for Howey Politics Indiana.

Predictions ... with three weeks to go

By CHRIS SAUTTER

WASHINGTON – I try to avoid making predictions during a presidential campaign. Aside from the fact that I'm superstitious, recent presidential races have been difficult to predict until much closer to the election. When I have made predictions, I've often been wrong. For example, I declined an invitation in 2000 to fly to Nashville to be with the Gore campaign in the event of a recount. "There is no way there will be a presidential recount," I said.



But this year the dynamics have been set for months. The most recent developments such as President Trump's disastrous

debate performance, a New York Times report that Trump had not paid taxes for 10 years before 2016 and then only \$750 for the next two years, and Trump's handling of his COVID, point to momentum moving in Joe Biden's direction. Post-debate polls reveal a Biden bounce. A CNN poll released Tuesday, Oct. 6, shows Biden leading Trump by 16 points, 57% to 41%. A NBC/WSJ poll released Sunday, Oct. 4, has Biden leading Trump by 14 points, 53% to 39%. Biden is running ahead in all the battleground states and running even in some states once believed to be safe for Trump. Even assuming wavering Trump voters return home, it doesn't look promising for the president's reelection chances.

With that in mind, below are my predictions with less than a month to go.

1.) There is usually tightening before the election, but Joe Biden should easily defeat Donald Trump 54% to 45%. I believe Biden will carry all the states Barack Obama won in 2008, except Indiana. But Biden likely also wins Arizona and at least one of Iowa, Ohio, and Georgia. My prediction would have Biden winning the 365 electoral votes Obama won (Indiana and Arizona each has 11 electoral votes so it's an even trade) plus at least one of Iowa (6), Ohio (16) or Georgia (16). Biden would have to win all three to reach 400 electoral votes (403 to be exact). The last presidential candidate to win 400 electoral votes was George H. W. Bush with 426 electoral votes in 1988.

2.) Democrats take control of the U.S. Senate. Democrats are poised to win at least three of Arizona, Colorado, Maine and North Carolina. Democrats will likely win at least one of Iowa, Kansas, Montana, and Georgia. Democrats could even win an upset in South Carolina, Alabama (currently held by Democrat Doug Jones), Kentucky, Texas, or Mississippi. The Senate is currently 53-47 in favor of Republicans. Democrats will end up with at

least 52 seats. In North Carolina, Democrat Cal Cunningham's admission that he sent romantic text messages to a woman not his wife has thrown that race into uncertainty. Incumbent Thom Tillis contracted the COVID after attending the super coronavirus spreading White House Supreme Court announcement event. A Reuters/Ipsos poll released on Oct. 6 has Cunningham up by 5 points, 47% to 42%. But the full impact of his misstep has not registered. Democrat Mark Kelly has held a consistent healthy lead against incumbent Republican Martha McSally in Arizona and John Hickenlooper has consistently led incumbent Cory Gardner in Colorado. But a new poll in Maine suggests Susan Collins is bouncing back against Sara Gideon after trailing for months. Meanwhile, Teresa Greenfield is running slightly ahead of Republican incumbent Joni Ernst in Iowa while Barbara Bollier is in a tossup race with Roger Marshall in the open Kansas seat and Gov. Steve Bullock and Sen. Steve Daines are in a dogfight in Montana. Democrats believe there are at least NINE Republican-held Senate seats in play this year. If Biden ends up winning big, most close Senate races will tip toward the Democrats.

3.) Democrats will gain a net 10 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Democrats gained 41 House seats in the 2018 midterm elections so there are few historically competitive seats left for them to pick up in 2020. But they are competing in districts they haven't won in decades. One of those is Indiana 5, the seat held by crazy rightwing Danny Burton for 30 years. All signs indicate Democrat Christina Hale will be the next 5th District congresswoman succeeding retiring Republican Susan Brooks.

4.) The presidential election will be called within a day or two after Election Day. All the hand-wringing about confusion over the outcome of the presidential election will prove to have been unnecessary. Some states will take many days and even weeks to count all the ballots. However, key battleground states like Florida, North Carolina and Ohio have tight deadlines and will be able to report unofficial returns rather quickly. In addition, the reported results along with exit polls should show an indisputable victory for Joe Biden in most other battleground states. In other words, the outcome of the presidential race is likely to be clear the morning after if not on election night.

5.) Trump's efforts to disrupt and discredit the election will be unsuccessful. President Trump has been banking on an election close enough to steal. Trump's unsupported attacks on the legitimacy of voting by mail will make a difficult situation more challenging for election officials. But his desire to preemptively cast doubt on election results will not work given Biden's likely margin. In other words, in spite of Trump's push to have Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court nomination confirmed before the election to give him another vote on the Court, there will be no Bush v. Gore II. That's not to say there won't be cases filed and some election night skirmishes. But generally speaking, votes will be counted without a major hitch.

Many observers point to 2016 to caution against reaching premature conclusions about the outcome. There

are still more than three weeks, two debates and potentially several major events to go. As Yogi Berra used to say, "It ain't over till it's over." But three weeks out the ground is rumbling and the political winds are favoring a big Biden win rather than another Trump shocker. There are too many fundamental differences between the two elections for a repeat of 2016.

The more likely open question is not whether Trump will lose but whether 2020 is more like a 1980 year when the presidential race brought a slew of surprise Sen-

ate seats with the presidential outcome. Or is 2020 more like 1988 when the presidential race was an Electoral College blowout but few surprises otherwise? A growing number of insiders, including Republicans, suspect a Trump collapse will bring more than a few Democratic congressional victories. ❖

Sautter is a Democratic media consultant based in Washington.

Three weeks to go and we know nothing

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – How will President Donald J. Trump's coronavirus diagnosis impact the race? Will the pandemic effect turn-out? How effectively will election officials process the expected surge in mail-in ballots? How long will it take to count votes and announce a definitive victor? A week? A month? After the New Year? Who knows?!



With three weeks left before Election Day, we know nothing. Literally nothing. Yes, that means you, me, the media, and candidates themselves. We all pretend to have answers but come on, man (h/t Joe Biden), Nostradamus we are not (and Nostradamus he was not).

Political events no longer follow a predictable cause and effect formulation. Machiavellian plotting is for naught (just ask

Nancy Pelosi, who tried to squash Bernie Sanders' Iowa momentum by chaining him to his Senate desk during the impeachment trial) and all the norms of public life have been erased from our memories as if we are Tommy Lee Jones and the universe is Will Smith.

In an age of data, analytics and information, where computers and algorithms are supposed to predict the future, we instead live in an Age of Improvisation where humans know nothing of what is on tap for tomorrow and are forced to roll with the punches. All the imagination one can muster is no match for the shocking and unexpected cosmic occurrences coming after the next commercial break.

For example, we have no idea if Americans will eventually rally around the flag as conventional wisdom dictates or if they will punish a sick, but improving, commander-in-chief for not wrestling the virus as effectively as he wrestled Vince McMahon on WrestleMania.

Sure, Trump's polling bumped up slightly in the early weeks of the pandemic, but unlike moments of sustained unity such as George H.W. Bush's 89% approval rating following the ouster of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait or his son's 90% level of support in the days after Sept. 11, 2001, Trump's numbers cratered suddenly and almost in concert with his appearances at the daily coronavirus news briefing.

How could this be? Conventional wisdom tells us that the more exposure to a person, place or thing, the more likely a customer or voter is to feel a sense of loyalty to the product or candidate. McDonalds whets the appetite of millions with mouth-watering advertisements for its most popular product, the Big Mac, on the daily even with universal recognition. But there's someone to whom conventional wisdom does not conform. As Trump's airtime climbed north, his polling fell further south. Sound familiar?

We know from the surveying debacle of 2016 that Trump's support can be suppressed in conventional polling. Pro-Trump respondents are not always willing to spill their guts to pollsters. Plus, the struggle with modeling a representative sampling of the American electorate remains a moving target. Trump voters cannot be placed into a single ideological, demographic or geographic box.

Never mind that Trump has always played a game of chicken with the concept of diminishing returns, at least in the conventional sense. He is simultaneously everywhere. No channel is immune to the cultural and political phenomenon that follows you like optical art. Turn on the news and he's lobbing insults at Pelosi. Flip the channel and he's making a cameo in "Home Alone 2." I even swear to have seen his image in my soup.

The threat of over-exposure and unreliable polling aside, Trump's reelection campaign already faced historical and conventional headwinds long before coronavirus stamped its visa at American border checkpoints.

Never in the history of the United States – and this is no exaggeration – have four presidents been reelected back-to-back-to-back-to-back. As I wrote in a CNN.com article in October 2015, the Jefferson-Madison-Monroe and Clinton-Bush-Obama hat tricks are the closest our nation has been to an unbroken trend of four two-term presidents. So can Trump, in 2020 as he did in 2016,

turn the tables on conventional wisdom again?

Under the rules of old, a wise strategist could guide the political plains with the ease of a Jedi. That was then, this is now. Nothing matters anymore. Predictions are wrong. Studies are debunked. Experts whiff.

"The future is unwritten, and anyone who tells you they know what is going to happen is wrong. We are in utterly uncharted territory," MSNBC primetime host Chris Hayes said on his program the night Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away. What he meant to say is: We're all making

this up as we go along. ❖

Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokesman for former director of national intelligence and U.S. senator Dan Coats. Currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group in Indianapolis. He is also an Atlantic Council millennium fellow, Council on Foreign Relations term member and author of "The War on Millennials."

Trump is the lead cause of 'infodemic'

By KELLY HAWES

ANDERSON – On Thursday, researchers at Cornell University released a study identifying the largest driver of misinformation about the coronavirus as the president of the United States. Before the sun came up the next day, that same president had tested positive for the virus.



In the wake of the news about his diagnosis, the president's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, said his boss was experiencing mild symptoms. "The great thing about this president is not only is he staying committed to working on behalf of the America people," Meadows said. "We have a president that is not only on the job, will remain on the job,

and I'm optimistic that he'll have a very quick and speedy recovery."

Medical experts note that the president is in a high risk group because of his age and his weight. And it's almost anyone's guess how the virus will progress. The president might recover quickly, the experts say, or he might develop more serious symptoms weeks down the road.

This is no laughing matter, and no one should wish the president ill. Still, you have to at least shake your head at the timing. One day, the president is called out for his lies. The next day, he tests positive for the virus he's been lying about.

In carrying out their study, the Cornell researchers analyzed 38 million articles in English-language news outlets around the world. "The biggest surprise was that the president of the United States was the single largest driver of misinformation about COVID," the study's lead author, Sarah Evanega, told The New York Times. "That's concerning in that there are real-world dire health implications."

The articles in the study appeared between Jan. 1 and May 26 in what the study called "traditional media"

and other major news outlets. Nearly 3% of the articles examined by the researchers contained falsehoods. Some came in the context of fact checks, the researchers said, but many appeared without question or correction.

"Unwittingly or unintentionally, media do play a major role in disseminating misinformation because they amplify the voices of prominent people, even if those sources are incorrect," Evanega told NBC News.

Evanega said she and her team of researchers tackled the study because the World Health Organization had identified the "infodemic" surrounding the coronavirus as a serious concern in fighting the pandemic. "If people are misled by unscientific and unsubstantiated claims about the disease," she said, "they may be less likely to observe official guidance and thus risk spreading the disease."

The researchers identified 11 main topics of misinformation, including one conspiracy theory claiming the pandemic was manufactured by Democrats and another suggesting the initial outbreak in Wuhan, China, had been linked to people eating bat soup.

But the researchers say the most common misinformation in news reports involved the president's comments on miracle cures such as taking anti-malarial drugs or injecting disinfectants.

"I see the disinfectant that knocks it out in a minute, one minute," the president said during a briefing in April. "And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning? As you see, it gets in the lungs. It does a tremendous number on the lungs, so it would be interesting to check that."

Months later, the president finds himself among the more than 7 million Americans who have been diagnosed with the disease. As news broke of his diagnosis, nearly 210,000 people had died. The ironies are everywhere.

The president for weeks has been poking fun at Biden for his careful approach to the pandemic. Now the president finds himself under quarantine with a month to go in the campaign. It's almost poetic. ❖

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Trump lost opportunity to stage his comeback

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND — So often in a political debate, it's not something said on issues, the actual words, that has the most impact with voters. It's how a candidate looks and acts while saying it. Thus it was that the first presidential debate, although ridiculed as a train wreck, a miserable mess, and justifiably so, was a campaign event with potential impact on the presidential election.



While analysts focus now on what President Trump said about the Proud Boys and what former Vice President Joe Biden didn't say about expanding the Supreme Court, most of the millions viewing the debate focused on neither. Most never had heard

of the Proud Boys and didn't hear the reference amid the chaotic exchanges of three people talking at the same time. Most weren't waiting anxiously to hear about the number of justices.

Trump lost an opportunity to gain support he desperately needs to catch up when he looked so angry, so red-faced, as he acted in such a bullying way, shouting over efforts of Biden and moderator Chris Wallace of Fox News to be heard. It wasn't what he said that was rambling, hard for viewers to follow. It was how he said it as he raged at Biden and Wallace.

Biden won in all the significant polls right after the debate, not because of great debating skill, which he lacks, or the words he said, hard-to-hear words as Trump interrupted constantly.

Biden looked more likeable.

He smiled amidst the vicious attack, an attack designed to make him blow up in anger. He smiled. Often. Smiled instead of crumbling, cringing or cowering under attack.

Also, and this was very, very important, Biden looked at the camera, looking out at and speaking directly to the vast viewing audience in America, seldom turning to face Trump or Wallace. Trump glared in an intimidating way at Biden or Wallace, not looking out to connect with his audience in homes all over the country.

Looking at the right camera is a standard rule for a televised debate. If Trump had prepared for the debate, he

would have understood. Biden, who prepared, knew to look at the camera, not at the bully.

Did the debate decide the election? Of course not. Most voters viewing the debate in this sharply divided land already had decided on their presidential choice. Not many remain undecided.

Trump didn't lose support in his solid base. The base enjoyed that he threw everything but the kitchen sink at Biden. If he had brought in and actually thrown a sink at Biden during the debate, even that wouldn't have diminished Trump base fervor.

If Biden had blundered that he was happy "to be here at Notre Dame for this debate," not knowing where he was wouldn't have cost him support from voters solidly for him as the alternative to Trump.

Still, there are some undecided voters, undecided about a choice, perhaps undecided about whether even to vote. Not many. But in an election that could be close in the key states, the decisive states, the precious few could make the difference.

Whether the debate – and now the debate over the debate in news coverage and in social media – will have much lasting impact is uncertain. The resulting disputing over whether the president is proud of the Proud Boys standing by to help with election returns could linger.

There will be many other events before Nov. 3. Who knows what final surprises loom ahead? Polls, pundits and professors who judge college debates all found that Hillary Clinton won the 2016 debates with Trump. She won the debates. He won Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Biden's debate win won't be long remembered if he also comes up short in the key states. ❖

Colwell covers Indiana politics for the South Bend Tribune.

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YOUR FRIENDS ALL HANG OUT HERE... DO YOU?

Trump and taxes

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Calm down! It's been like this for a very long time and it won't get better because you just discovered you don't like it. The revelations about Mr. Trump's tax returns fomented great indigestion. But why?



Your neighbors down the road are doing the same, just on a different scale.

Every tax season, big retail accounting chains – can you say H&R Block? – guarantee every credit, deduction and exemption you're entitled to. The problem is, your life is so uncomplicated, there are hardly any credits, deductions or exemptions you're entitled to.

Mr. Trump says he is a real estate developer. He puts together deals with other people's money (and a bit of his own) to reshape our cities and countryside. Hotels, offices, condos, retail space, restaurants, golf resorts, and other new facilities are his specialties.

Other real estate magnates build factory and warehouse spaces along interstate highways. A different group focuses on housing. They convert farm and forest into chalets and cookie-cutter castles. A few even tackle the more difficult task of rebuilding and repurposing old inner-city tracts. Developers are no more or less greedy than the folks you know well. They are different from you and me because they work on a scale of space and time very much larger and longer than our home improvement projects.

As the agents of growth and modernization, developers command attention from the moguls of business and

government. Since they borrow lots of money, they have extensive financial contacts. Since they spend that money, they know the big contractors, sub-contractors, and labor leaders. Since their enterprises transform parts of our communities, they are masters of government relations. Development can take a decade, and developers need cash flowing all the time.

As important people, doing important things, they seek understanding from the tax authorities. Hence, real estate transactions have many considerations (loopholes, you might call them) when it comes to tax time.

Developers are not alone in seeking understanding and obtaining consideration in the tax code. If you have children, you get an exemption for each child. If you are over 65, you pay a little less in taxes than your 64-year-old neighbor who mirrors you in every respect, except age. Clergy get specific tax breaks. Indiana says two identical houses may not owe the same property tax. The rented house might pay a higher property tax than the owner-occupied house.

Are there good reasons for every tax consideration (loophole)? Is it a good idea to wipe the slate clean? Should we treat everyone and every dollar spent or received alike?

If Mr. Trump's tax returns were filed in accordance with the law, our outrage might be misplaced. Perhaps we need to ask, "To what extent, and under what conditions, should we subsidize real estate development?" Does it take an audacious Donald Trump for us to question our values and judgement? ❖

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Trump not making up lost ground

By **KYLE KONDIK and J. MILES COLEMAN**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — We could recap, at great length, all of the crazy events that have happened just in the week since we unveiled last week's rating changes. But we suspect Crystal Ball readers don't need any reminders.

Last week, we wrote that Donald Trump needed to help himself at last week's debate more than Joe Biden did, because Trump is trailing and Biden is leading.



We did not think Trump did help himself, and the numbers we've seen since the debate have backed up that initial reaction. It also does not appear that the president and many top officials contracting coronavirus has made the president look better or improved his chances.

Ever since Trump took that ride down the Trump Tower escalator more than five years ago, a common question has been whether this episode or that episode would hurt his standing. In many instances, the answer has appeared to be no. But with just weeks to go until the election, asking whether something hurts Trump is the wrong question. Rather, the key question is whether something helps.

In recent days, Joe Biden's significant lead nationally has widened. Biden's leads in the RealClearPolitics and FiveThirtyEight polling averages are now

close to 10 points apiece, and a couple of respected national polls, CNN/SSRS and NBC News/Wall Street Journal, have shown Biden leading by 16 and 14 points, respectively. The state-level numbers generally have been bad for the president, too: for instance, Monmouth University pegged Biden's lead in Pennsylvania earlier this week at around 10 points; the pollster's previous Keystone State survey had Biden up only a few points based on different turnout models. In other words, one of the better state-level polls for Trump in a key state was reversed in fresher polling.

At least some of the numbers we're seeing for Biden now likely represent a sugar high for the challenger, which can happen sometimes when one candidate performs poorly or is on the wrong side of a bad story. Hillary Clinton's national lead against Trump hit double digits in some polls following the revelation of the Access Hollywood recording in early October 2016, although Clinton's aggregate lead over Trump in national polling as measured by RealClearPolitics hit only a high point of seven that October, and her share of the vote in the average never surpassed 49% in the fall (she ended up getting 48%).

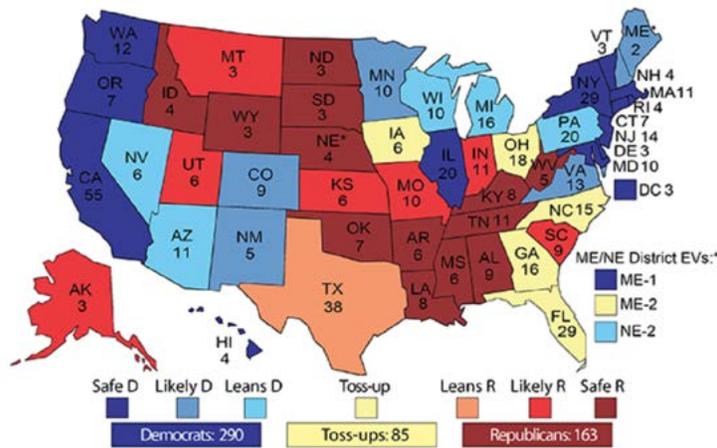
Biden, meanwhile, has not dipped under 49% in RealClearPolitics since early August, and he was approaching 52% Wednesday evening.

To borrow a phrase from Biden, here's the deal: The president needs the election to get closer to have a reasonable chance of once again pulling off an upset. That can still happen, but it is not happening now. The clock keeps ticking to Election Day, and voters are already voting.

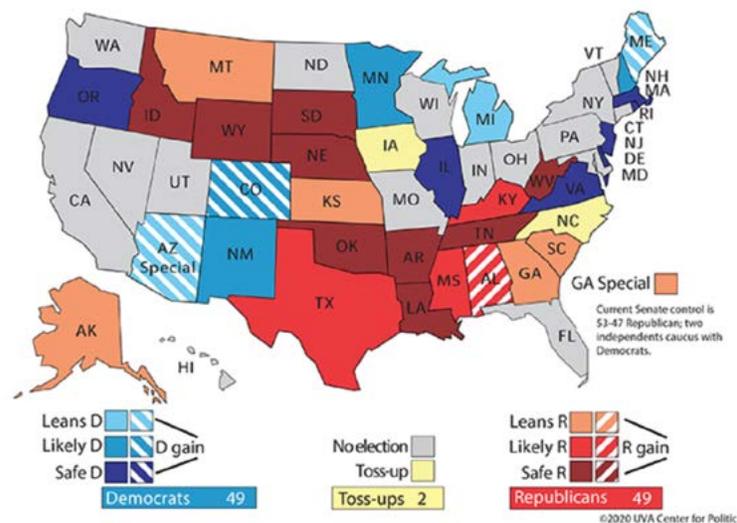
Last week, we pushed some Midwestern state ratings in favor of Biden, citing his apparent gains with white voters. This week, we are moving another northern, largely white state, New Hampshire, in his favor.

The Granite State, so close in 2016, does not appear to be a major focus of the campaign, and the notoriously fickle state may be moving away from the president. Several recent polls of New Hampshire have shown Biden

Map 1: Crystal Ball Electoral College ratings



Map 2: Crystal Ball Senate ratings



leading by roughly 10 points in aggregate -- a shift that is similar to the kinds of improvements Biden appears to be making over Clinton's showing across the competitive states of the Northeast and Midwest (Clinton only won New Hampshire by 0.4 points in 2016). New Hampshire is now Likely Democratic.

Of the states Clinton won, all are now rated Likely or Safe Democratic, with the exception of Nevada (Leans Democratic).

Beyond the Midwest, we now have seen enough to make two other shifts in the emerging battlegrounds of the Sun Belt: Arizona and Georgia. The former moves from Toss-up to Leans Democratic, and the latter from Leans Republican to Toss-up.

Biden's lead in Arizona has been small but steady, generally in the neighborhood of 3-5 points in poll averages. His path to victory in the state almost certainly involves

flipping Maricopa County (Phoenix) from red to blue. Maricopa, which casts about 60% of the state's votes, was one of only a handful of the nation's most populous counties to back Trump in 2016, but it seems primed to shift to Biden. One recent data point: the state pollster OH Predictive Insights released a poll Wednesday morning of AZ-6, a relatively affluent and highly-educated suburban district that covers Scottsdale and other parts of Greater Phoenix (AZ-6 is entirely contained within Maricopa). The district shifted from giving Mitt Romney a 21-point margin in 2012 to a 10-point margin for Trump, and Trump was only up one point in the poll.

This kind of erosion threatens the GOP's statewide margin.

While Georgia and Arizona are a lot different -- the former's diversity is driven by Black voters, while the latter's is driven by Hispanic voters -- one commonality is that both states have a huge metro area where Biden seems poised to improve on Clinton. In Georgia's case, that is metro Atlanta, with the suburban congressional districts GA-6 and GA-7 representing prime candidates to switch from Trump to Biden. ❖

Mark Souder, Howey Politics Indiana: Vice President Pence had a primary short-term goal, with two secondary goals with last night's debate. So did Senator Harris. One was to make more convincing points than the debate opponent. Secondly, to show America that if the President would not survive the term, the VP candidate could take over and govern. Thirdly, it was audition for 2024. The vice president showed that he was comfortable with key issues and to the degree possible a debate can make the point, showed he could govern. Senator Harris had the stage presence, and can give convincing prepared remarks, but lacked some depth when challenged – repeating herself numerous times – but overall, showed herself to be a potential president as well. Both candidates showed potential to be serious candidates for 2024. They will both at least start among the top three, if not the leader in the next round. On the immediate goal of the evening, however, the vice president made his points more effectively than the senator. She made a few points well, and diehard Trump haters will think she won just as diehard Trump supporters think Pence won. For those actually listening, Pence more effectively turned it into an issue debate – on which he played good defense on COVID, turned climate change into a targeted victory, hammered Biden's inconsistency on the Green New Deal and on taxes. Pence made some telling points on terrorism, on NAFTA and on China. His only problems were on some things Trump has said or allegedly said, which really can't be defended. Harris handled herself fairly well overall, but actually sounded condescending when she twice complained that Pence was when he wasn't. It was clearly a pre-planned response whenever she didn't have an answer. At the beginning, her smirking was distracting but Pence later did some of the same. Overall, both candidates seemed like adults and even the back and forth was within the limits of normal debates. But Harris landed no new blows, was less effective than she could have been on COVID attacks, and continued to stumble around on packing the Courts. ❖



James Briggs, IndyStar: You probably can't name the Democrat running for governor Dr. Woody Myers had a special event planned for Thursday. The Democratic candidate for Indiana governor was scheduled to appear on video along with Jennifer McCormick, the Republican state superintendent. McCormick has endorsed Myers, offering a rare notable affirmation in his otherwise endorsement-starved race against Gov. Eric Holcomb. Their joint event was a chance for Myers to make bipartisan inroads against a popular moderate Republican. Or, at least, it was supposed to be. The event didn't happen. "Facebook seems to be down right now with live streams," the Myers campaign said on Facebook. "Having troubleshooted for 20 minutes, we are being forced to reschedule our Education Town Hall for early next week." Myers' Facebook fail is emblematic of a sputtering campaign that is over-reliant

on social media because that's about all it's got. The campaign can't raise money, it burns through cash, it has been hemorrhaging staff members, and, as far as anyone with polling data can tell, it is not even in the same orbit as the Holcomb campaign. You might be wondering why Myers is struggling so much — that is, if you even know who Myers is. There's a good chance you don't. That's another problem. On paper, Myers, 66, seems engineered for this moment, as though the universe led him through a five-decade practicum for the sole purpose of challenging a Republican governor in 2020. But Democrats are alarmed by what they see as a campaign that never got on track — and now it has no apparent path to victory. "I'd like to have seen Woody place more emphasis on raising the necessary funds to communicate with voters," said Kip Tew, the former chairman of the Indiana Democratic Party. The campaign had just \$72,300 on hand as of July, compared with more than \$8 million for Holcomb. Some interest groups that supported Democrat John Gregg four years ago are now aligned with Holcomb; others are sitting out the race, at least when it comes to financial contributions. Myers argues that the pandemic squashed his fundraising efforts. ❖

David Wasserman, New York Times: These 10 bellwether counties — five in Sun Belt battlegrounds, five in the Frost Belt (loosely defined to include Iowa) — could point us toward each state's winner. They run the gamut from meatpacking hubs to white-collar office parks, and from peach orchards to yacht-dense retiree havens. But there is something they all have in common: Their votes will matter a lot. Bonus: Vigo County, Ind. (pop. 107,038) Outlook: Lean Trump. Perhaps the most widely cited bellwether in the country, Vigo, which includes Terre Haute, is the only county in America that has voted for the winner of every presidential race since 1956. But it may lose that status in 2020: In 2016, it broke for Mr. Trump by a whopping 15 points, and it's easy to see him carrying it again this fall, even if he loses the presidency. ❖

Tim Alberta, Politico: Last week, I heard from one of the smartest Republicans alive, a longtime party operator who lives in a state Trump carried by double digits. He told me the polling he was seeing there was something out of a nightmare; these were numbers he never expected to see in his lifetime. The only thing more dizzying than that? I had another conversation, with another dependable red-state Republican, the very next day, and heard the very same thing. Both of these men were sounding the alarm, alerting me that Trump could actually lose their states, and would at the very least drag down a number of down-ballot Republicans, because women have turned on the GOP at a historic clip. Trump lost women by 13 points to Clinton, and Republicans have long worried that the figure could climb into the high teens. There is now genuine worry that the margin could explode north of 20 points—the biggest gender gap in modern election history. ❖

Holcomb implores Hoosiers on COVID

INDIANAPOLIS — As hospital admissions from COVID-19 across Indiana hit their highest level this week since May, Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday implored Hoosiers to continue to wear masks, practice social distancing and take other steps to keep the virus from spreading (Russell, [IBJ](#)). “I just plead with everyone to do your part,” Holcomb said in an unscheduled livestream appearance with Dr. Kristina Box, Indiana’s state health commissioner. The two reviewed Indiana’s performance in infections, hospitalizations and deaths, but did not take any questions. Earlier in the afternoon, Box and Dr. Lindsay Weaver, chief medical officer of the state health department, reviewed similar data and took questions from reporters. On Wednesday, Indiana’s death toll from the pandemic hit 3,500. The number of people in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities crossed the 2,000 mark, with 53 new and confirmed deaths in the last week, for a new total of 2,046.

The number of people in Indiana hospitals with COVID-19 has climbed in recent weeks, and hit 1,138 on Oct. 5, the highest since May 28. The seven-day average for COVID-19 hospitalizations is at its highest since June 4. Hospitals have reported they are girding for a second surge of patients, although they don’t know how severe it will be. It’s a critical moment for Indiana. The virus is continuing to spread, even as Holcomb last month moved the state to Stage 5 of the Back on Track recovery plan. Stage 5 essentially lifts all restrictions, except for some social distancing requirements and regulatory conditions for larger crowds. “We are in Stage 5,” Box said. “But we still need to wear masks and practice social distancing so we can stay in Stage 5. I cannot emphasize that enough.” Holcomb



added, “It doesn’t matter what community you’re in, or how small or large an event. It could be a funeral, a wedding, a football game. ... We just see the odds of this virus spreading when you let your guard down.”

School dashboard lacking data

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana education leaders this week reported 2,845 coronavirus cases in schools since the beginning of the fall semester, according to the state’s new school COVID dashboard. That’s 491 cases more than last week—thanks largely to more schools contributing data (Washington, [Chalkbeat](#)). But while the database gives a peek at the number of cases in schools across the state, the dashboard lacks other data that public health experts and superintendents say would put into context the spread of COVID-19 in schools and would be more useful to them. For instance, it doesn’t list the percentage of people in schools testing positive, known as the positivity rate. That depicts the extent of the pandemic and helps gauge the relative safety of opening campuses. Indiana’s seven-day positivity rate has been between 4% and 5%. If it reaches 10%, that could cause concern, said Thomas Duszynski, a epidemiology professor at IUPUI’s Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health.

Lilly seeks FDA OK on COVID drug

INDIANAPOLIS — Eli Lilly said it is seeking the authorization for a drug derived from a blood sample of one of the earliest U.S. survivors of Covid-19. Eli Lilly & Co. said it has requested U.S. authorization of the emergency use of an experimental antibody-based treatment for people with recently diagnosed, mild-to-moderate Covid-19, following positive results from clinical testing ([Wall Street Journal](#)). The Indianapolis-based company said it is seeking the

authorization for its drug, code named LY-CoV555, which was derived from a blood sample of one of the earliest U.S. survivors of Covid-19. If cleared, it could be the first to treat less severe cases of Covid-19. The few other therapies authorized for Covid-19 treatment, including remdesivir from Gilead Sciences Inc., GILD +0.59% target hospitalized patients with more serious cases.

2nd presidential debate to be virtual

WASHINGTON — The Commission on Presidential Debates announced Thursday that the second presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, scheduled for next week, will be conducted virtually ([Politico](#)). The shift to a virtual format comes as Trump continues treatment for Covid-19 at the White House, after being discharged from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center earlier this week. President Trump told [Fox News](#) this morning he will not participate in a virtual debate. “The commission changed the debate style and that’s not acceptable to us,” Trump said on “Mornings with Maria.” “I beat him in the first debate, I beat him easily.”

Holcomb urges job creation

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb is looking to future economic opportunities as a partial solution to businesses closing around the state during the pandemic (Horton, [Indiana Public Media](#)). A conference Wednesday in Indianapolis highlighted companies around the world looking to make future investments. Hundreds of people are attending a virtual conference hosted by the U.S. Department of Commerce focused on continuing to bring together advanced manufacturing and technology companies around the world. Holcomb said while it’s concerning and tragic that some businesses around the state have and will close due to the pandemic, this conference gives a potential path forward.